

*The Lordship of CHRIST considered, as it
extends both to the Dead and Living;
and as acquired by his dying, rising
again, and reviving.*

I N
Two SERMONS

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S E R M O N I.

The Lordship of CHRIST considered in general, with its extent both to the Dead and Living.



ROM. xiv. 9.

For to this end CHRIST both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be LORD both of the Dead and Living.



THE Death of one Minister after another from this Lecture, and the appearance of others to fill up their Places, may probably occasion your thinking both of those that *were*, and those that *are* employed in this Service. If upon the present or any like occasion, your thoughts are thus engaged, it cannot be improper to request that you will look yet further and higher; namely, to him whom our Text describes as LORD both of the *Dead* and *Living*.

Good Men deceas'd, and they that survive, are still in the same Family. * *For of our LORD Jesus Christ the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named.* They, and we, are still Domesticks of the same Household, and under the Government and in the Service of the same common LORD.

This LORD made the *Deceased* what they were when on Earth, and he makes them what they now are in the Heavens, and he ordered their remove from one world to the other. It is from him also that we who *survive* receive our orders and furniture, and have our stations for service and trial assigned to us, till we have reach'd the bounds he has set, and then we must *go to them*, but they must not *return to us*. Thus it will continue to be, till at last all shall meet together in *one* great assembly, and the LORD will take account of his Servants, and will give to every one according to his works. Then those Servants that had *two Talents* shall be received into the *Joy of their LORD*, as well as those that had *five*, if they are found proportionably careful to improve them.

In the mean time, CHRIST will never want proper instruments to carry on his gracious and wise designs in the world. He can furnish suitably to the times and places in which he calls men to act; only this he will have us to know, that the *excellency of the power is of him*. Both lives and hearts are in his hand. Our attendance here would not be in vain this day, could we gain a lively and lasting sense of this. We should then continually revere the dread Sovereign of life and death; and, let our LORD *send by whom he will send*, we should fix our hope and expectation upon him, who is the wise and faithful Dispenser of all graces, and blessings, from one *Generation* to another, and from one *world* to another. With this view it is that I shall now enlarge on the words read: Words, that if duly considered tend to promote *Peace on Earth*, as well as *Glory* to him that reigns in the *bighest*.

You will observe from the Context, how early a fault it was in the *Christian Church*, for some Men to judge the consciences and conduct of others in *things doubtful*; and to endanger the State, or reject the Persons of *weak Christians* by raising needless disputations. Therefore they are required (in the 1st verse of this Chapter) to *receive him that is weak in the Faith, but not to doubtful disputations*; or, *not to judge his doubtful thoughts*.

Upon this the Apostle expostulates with his *Romans* (v. 4.) *Who art thou, that judgest another Man's Servant?* Look into thy self, and study well this Question, *Who art thou?* A Question that would find thee work enough *at home*, (if thou *wouldst* diligently consider it, and faithfully answer it) so that thou *wouldst* have little time, and less inclination, to take upon thee the management of thy Brother's conscience, and the directing of affairs *abroad* where thou hast no right to order and determine matters. Think also of thy *Station*: Thou art a *Servant* as well as him thou judgest, and it is to his *Master* that he is accountable, not to thee who art a fellow-servant with him.

He that owns *CHRIST* as *Master*, and keeps in his *Family*, and obeys his *Commands*, ought not to be judg'd or censur'd merely for his refusing to fall in with his *fellow-servants* in some things, which of their own heads they may devise and conjecture, or which they see fit to do. It is therefore to act all out of character, and out of place, for any one to judge another Man's servant. *To his own Master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up*. Observe this carefully: Perhaps he shall be holden up in that very thing for which thou judgest him; or he shall be brought to see his mistake by means that *GOD* will use, much better than by any of thy censures, and the wrathful measures thou art for taking with him; or, he may be accepted and pardoned of *GOD* at last, tho' he should be

be mistaken, if he be sincere and upright in heart. *For, it is added, GOD is able to make him stand.*

Beside ; it ought well to be considered, that the Servant of CHRIST is not left to himself, or *given up* to be at his own disposal either in life or death. *For none of us liveth to himself, and no Man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the LORD; and whether we die, we die unto the LORD; whether we live therefore or die, we are the LORD's.* A Christian's Life is a life of dedication to his LORD; and, according to that capacity and grace which is bestowed upon him, 'tis a life spent and conducted as his LORD wills. His Death also, with every thing important that relates to it is directed by his LORD: He is subject to one and the same dominion and government living and dying.

This Dominion is entirely committed to JESUS CHRIST. The way by which he acquir'd it, is declared to us in the Text. We find from other passages of Scripture, that every *part* of our Saviour's life and sufferings, had a particular end and reason. 'Tis therefore said, *he was delivered for our offences, and he rose for our justification, and he became the first fruits of them that slept, and the like.* But here it is recorded that there was one great and *common end* of all, to which we ought to have a principal regard. *For to this end CHRIST both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be LORD both of the dead and living.*

Let us therefore enquire,

- I. What we are to know and believe concerning the *Lordship* of CHRIST in *general*?
- II. In what respects he is said to be LORD both of the *dead* and *living*?
- III. How this Lordship and Dominion was *obtain'd* and *acquir'd*?
- IV. The Reasons of a Lordship being thus founded and constituted.

The two first of these Queries may be enlarged on at present; the other two must be reserved to another opportunity; the *Application* will be at the close of each Discourse.

I. Let

I. Let us enquire what we are to know and believe concerning the *Lordship* of CHRIST in general.

Our Saviour himself speaking of this, tells his Disciples, that * *All power was given to him in Heaven and in Earth.* St. Peter speaking of him, says, † he is LORD of ALL. And St. Paul describing this Dominion of CHRIST, represents him ‡ as seated FAR ABOVE all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, having all things put under his feet.

As SON of GOD, he is LORD of the Universe. He gives Law to *Angels*, lays reins upon *Devils*, and hath power over all *Flesh*. All the works of GOD, all Creatures animate and inanimate, are Subjects of the Kingdom of CHRIST in this extensive notion of it. Hence it is observed (by Bishop Pearson) “not only that CHRIST is LORD, but that this title doth so properly belong to him, that THE LORD alone, absolutely taken, is frequently used by the Evangelists and Apostles determinately for CHRIST; insomuch that the Angels observe that dialect, *Come see the place where THE LORD lay.*” That Author has plainly and fully proved, that the original JEHOVAH was spoken of CHRIST by the holy *Prophets*, and was understood of their *Messiah* by the *Jews*; with respect to which the Title of LORD is attributed to CHRIST by the *Apostles*, as the usual interpretation of the *Old Testament* JEHOVAH. It therefore undoubtedly follows, that those descriptions which are given us of the dominion and government of JEHOVAH, may be applied to CHRIST, and do truly belong to him. So that the Lordship of CHRIST thus considered is boundless and endless: He is over all GOD blessed for ever. This is called by Divines the *natural Kingdom* of CHRIST: He, being the

* Matth. xxviii. 18.

† Ephes. i. 21, 22.

‡ Acts x. 36.

only Son of GOD must of necessity be *Heir* and LORD of all in his Father's house.

But that dominion the *Text* speaks of, is what our systems of Divinity call *Oeconomical*. It is a Lordship here described as the fruit of CHRIST's Death, and Resurrection, and therefore must be meant of his *mediatorial Kingdom*. This Kingdom or Lordship may be divided, for order sake, into three great Provinces, with respect to which CHRIST takes, and acts under, *different Titles*.

The *first* and chief Province is HEAVEN. There this LORD hath his court and residence : And with respect to that Province he bears the title of the LORD OF GLORY.

In those happy Regions he is perfectly honoured and obeyed. His *Right* to govern is there universally acknowledged. No Infidel is there to dispute his right, or cavil against it, as is the case with many in our world. All his *Orders* are joyfully executed : No false Professor calling him LORD without *doing his will*, as is too common amongst us. There are no perverse disorderly actings or assumings ; but every subject of that kingdom above, knows his place, and keeps in it, and acts becoming it.

There is no *Sin*, nothing to defile no more than to offend, in all that populous and peaceful Province. Throughout those realms of light, all are pure, and without spot ; that is, either originally and indefectibly *holy*, or graciously made so. All is perfect harmony, and consummate bliss.

The *extent* of this Province none can describe. It is represented as consisting of *many* mansions ; and including *various* ranks of beings ; and thrones and crowns *innumerable* are said to be in the gift of this great LORD of Heaven. St. Paul speaks of a † *crown laid up*, not only for him, but for ALL them that love the appearing of the righteous Judge.

The *second* Province of the Mediatorial Kingdom and Lordship, is, the *visible* CHURCH.

However profane men may jest with this, CHRIST has a regard to it as no mean part of his Dominion. He therefore bears the title of HEAD OF THE CHURCH, including both the visible and invisible part of it.

Ambitious men may set up themselves for Lawgivers and Judges in the Church of CHRIST; and the powers of this earth may conspire, to make unto themselves a *Head*, of what they call the Church; and may pretend to fix terms of Communion, by altering or adding to the Doctrines and Institutions of CHRIST; but to those that truly believe in the LORD JESUS, there can be no other Head, Lawgiver, King, or Judge in and over his Church, but himself.

This part of CHRIST's Lordship is called the Kingdom of *Grace*: That before mention'd is called the Kingdom of *Glory*. And shall not he, who is *All in All* to those that are in the Kingdom of Glory above, be esteem'd as *All in All* to the Subjects of the Kingdom of *Grace* here below?

The *Extent* of this lower Province, is, to *All Christian* People, that are scattered over the face of the whole earth. It takes in All that are included in that expression of our Creed, the *Holy Catholick Church*. That is, All who are made *really* holy now, and shall be *perfectly* holy hereafter, by the Grace and Power of CHRIST, dispersed thro' all Nations, and in all parts of the earth, and of all ages, orders and conditions amongst men. We should therefore have a very awful concern upon our minds, not to narrow and lessen this Province of our Redeemer, by confining his Church to this or the other *Party*, and persuasion among Christians. All those Churches that hold the essentials of *Faith*, and *Worship*, and a *Holy Life* (and what these essentials are, the word of GOD alone must determine,) are undoubtedly parts of the Catholick Church, tho' there may be a great deal of *wood, and hay, and stubble, which shall be burnt*

up, that is now built upon the true and *only foundation* *. Thus extensive is the Empire of CHRIST in this Province, or part of it, the *visible Church*.

The *third* Province of the Mediator's Lordship, extends to *All Creatures and Persons without the Church*, for the increase and benefit of it.

With respect to this Province, CHRIST bears the title of KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORD'S : And also that other title, HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH.

He is, in his mediatorial capacity, head over all earthly Potentates, and heavenly Thrones and Dominions too ; and over *all things*, so far as is necessary to make them an occasion of *enlarging* his Church, or a means of *supporting* and *defending* it, or of bringing the members of it to *Glory* ; in all shewing forth his perfections and excellencies as Mediator.

All those things enumerated by St. *Paul*, that are not able to separate from the *Love* of GOD in CHRIST, must needs be subject to this LORD, or otherwise he could not make the Christian triumph over them. † *Death*, in all its forms, with all its causes and consequences, is under his Dominion. And so is *Life*, with all its advantages, or sufferings, its labours or trials. His Lordship also extends to *Angels, Principalities and Powers* ; to things *present*, and things *future*. It reaches to the *heights* of advancement and prosperity ; to the *depths* of debasement and adversity ; and in one word, to every thing that exists, so far as his own *honour* is concerned, or the *good* of his Church may be promoted, or the *final Salvation* of any of his faithful Disciples and Members is to be effected and brought about. This is express'd in very extensive terms in one of the *Epistles* to the *Corinthians* : † *Whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are your's, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's*. Thus much we are to know and believe concerning the *Lordship* of CHRIST in general.

* 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13.

† Rom. viii. 38.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

II. Let us next enquire, in *what respects* CHRIST is said to be LORD *both of the dead and living?*

The Dominion of CHRIST might be considered with reference to these *distinctly*, as in some respects he is LORD of the *living*, and in other respects LORD of the *dead*. But it would carry me beyond the time now allowed, to speak of the several instances of CHRIST's exercising his kingly Power and Authority, over *this* world and the world *invisible*, as they are under different laws and appointments. I shall therefore answer this enquiry more briefly, by mentioning some particulars in which *both* may be included and set together.

I. CHRIST is LORD both of the dead and living, as it is by *his orders that we enter the state of life, and the state of death.*

He admits both into the visible, and the invisible world, at his pleasure. He is the Prince and LORD of *life*, and he has the *keys of hell and death.*

He is the Author and Giver of *life*, both *natural*, and *spiritual*. It is not by chance, or by human contrivance that we come into this state of existence, but by the * order of Heaven. Without CHRIST is not *anything* made, that *is made*. Neither is it by the † *will of man*, or by the will of the *flesh*, that we are made alive unto God; but of *his own will*, says St. James ‡, *begat he us by the word of truth.* His word both commands us into being, and gives *life* to our Souls, tho' in a different way, and under different considerations.

In like manner, that is by *rule* and *edict*, men *die* out of our world; and they are admitted into the next world according to the appointment of CHRIST. He hath the *key*, and opens the door into eternity, and all must obey his summons. He told *Peter* † particularly, by *what death* he should glorify God. And a little be-

* 2 Macc. vii. 22.

† John i. 13.

‡ Jam. i. 18.

‡ Joh. xxi. 19.

fore our *Text* it is said, that *no man dieth to himself*. When, and where, and how the Christian shall close his life, is ordered by CHRIST, so as to serve the purposes of his Kingdom and Government. When he says, *it is finished*, we must *bow the head*, and *yield up the Ghost*, as our LORD himself did.

Thus, *living* at his command, and by his power; and then *dying* at his order and appointment, he may well be termed LORD *both of the dead and living*.

2. His Gospel is the great instrument of *peace*, and *rule of life*, to the *living*; and it is the great instrument of *Salvation*, and *Rule of Judgment*, to the *dead*.

Our Gospel is called the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, not only as he is the chief *Subject* of it, the principal thing it sets before us, but as he is the *Author* and *Giver* of it. From him it receives all its *power*, and by him it is ordered in its whole *course* from one part of the world to another. 'Tis this Gospel that is the *covenant of peace* into which God has entred with men, and it is *confirmed in the hands of a Mediator*; * JESUS the *Mediator of the new Covenant*. It is also the great instrument of *peace amongst men*, were it used right, as well as of *peace with God*.

Wherever the Light of this Gospel shines, it is the gift of CHRIST as LORD: And 'tis he, that also *removes the candlestick out of its place*. He must therefore be LORD of all that live by this Gospel, and under the influences of it, since it derives all its *power* and *efficacy* from him, and is *given* or *taken away* by him alone.

Farther; where this Gospel is received as it ought to be, it will bring men to *live* according to it. Their actions, words, and thoughts, their tempers, and consciences, must be ruled and guided by it. To the direction of this royal law of CHRIST's Kingdom we give up our selves, by the solemn covenanting *Rites of Baptism*, and the *holy Communion*. *Baptism* is appointed as an *inlissing* initiating rite, and the other Sa-

* Heb. xii. 24.

crament as a *confirming* establishing seal of our relation to CHRIST, under the character of Subjects and Disciples. And the Gospel Ministry is appointed for this very end, that we should preach not * *our selves*, but *Christ Jesus the LORD*. There are † *various gifts and differences of administrations, but the same LORD*.

By all these things we are to be brought into *subjection* to the Gospel of CHRIST, and are built up in the *Faith* of it and *Obedience* to it, walking according to this Rule at all times and in all things.

On the other hand, if we look to the *dead*, the *same Gospel* is the great instrument of their salvation, and their rule of judgment. It is by means of this, that the dead *find mercy and acceptance* with GOD, as they have *believed and obeyed* it, and not otherwise. It is according to this that all must be *judged*, and receive their final sentence at the tribunal of CHRIST. Very express and numerous are the places of *Scripture* that speak to this purpose, with which, I hope, none here are unacquainted.

The *Gospel* of CHRIST thus considered, declares him to be LORD both of the *living* and the *dead*. It is the great instrument by which all affairs are managed betwixt GOD and *Man*; by which the Spirits of men also, and their conduct toward *one another*, must be guided and regulated; and according to which all things in the *Church* of CHRIST are to be ordered and done. And then, it is the foundation of all those pleas by which the dead obtain mercy, and according to this all proceedings will be in the last general judgment. The *living* must order their *lives*, and the *dead* receive their *sentence*, by one and the *same rule*. In the mean time,

3. The *improvement and support of life* is wholly from CHRIST, and the *dead* are *laid up with him*, and committed to *his custody and care*.

It is by CHRIST alone that we have *access unto*

* 2 Cor. iv. 5.

† 1 Cor. xii. 5.

the Father, and to that *grace in which we stand*. We could not, in our best state, make immediate and direct approaches to the Deity without a *Mediator*. JESUS CHRIST has made *atonement*; and he makes *intercession*; and he sends the holy SPIRIT as the grand *Executor* of his *last Will* and Testament, to carry on his gracious designs in sanctifying, strengthening, and comforting souls.

Every thing is now to be transacted with GOD, in and through the *mediation* of JESUS CHRIST. All the graces and helps we enjoy, and all the blessings we receive, come for his sake. And all the sacrifices and services that are offered unto GOD, are acceptable only on the account of his merit and recommendation. Hence it is that St. Paul tells the *Colossians*, * *whatever they do in word or deed, all must be done in the name of the LORD JESUS*. And in another place the same Apostle says, *I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me. By his grace I am what I am*.

How justly is CHRIST stiled, on these accounts, the LORD of the *living*; as it is by his *aids* and in his *name* that we must do all things; and as the Father has committed all to the Son, and he gives life to whom he will; and the best cannot say, *they live*, so properly as they can say, that CHRIST *liveth in them*?

Again; if we speak of the *dead*, they are committed to the custody and care of CHRIST, and are *laid up with him*. He watches over the sleeping *dust*, and that very *dust* is *precious in his sight*. He also orders *departed Spirits* to the place appointed for them; and he cannot mistake their claim, or the station to which they are suited. He *prepares* the mansions in his Father's house, and he puts those into *possession* of them for whom they are designed. Hence it is that he tells the *Penitent* on the *Cross*, how he should be disposed of after death, and where he should be. This he made known to that dying *malefactor*, in answer to a most amazing request. It was desired, that he who was

now expiring on a *Cross*, would be mindful of a poor suffering, but believing criminal, when he should come into *his kingdom*. The answer was such as evidently shew'd, that CHRIST had a kingdom in the *unseen world*, and power to dispose of separate souls *there*, as well as a Dominion over them whilst *living on this earth*. * JESUS said unto him, *verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise*. In full assurance of this power of CHRIST, Stephen pray'd, † LORD JESUS receive my Spirit. And the Apostle ‡ Paul desired to depart, and to be with CHRIST. From whence it is manifest that the *souls* of good men do not only depart from their bodies at death, but they are with CHRIST, and with him as their LORD. It is *better, far better*, says the Text last quoted, to be *with CHRIST*, than to *abide in the flesh*. Therefore they do not only live and act with CHRIST, and under him, having the same faculties and consciousness that they now have in the body; but they shall employ themselves much *better*, and their state and their enjoyments will be much better than at present. All which being with CHRIST, it is implied that they are under his direction, in his presence, in his palace, to be and to do just as he orders.

How fitly, then, is CHRIST said to be LORD of the *dead*, as well as the living, since they are lodg'd with him, and intirely under his care and conduct?

4. CHRIST is LORD both of the dead and living, as the *restoration of life*, and the *utter destruction of death at last*, are both from him.

He quickens whom he will, and is become the author of *eternal life* to all them that obey him. By setting this life and immortality in a clear light, he now governs the thoughts, and directs the aims and intentions of men, and has a mighty influence upon their actions. By this means he has a power over them, in exciting to good actions, and restraining from many evils and disorders; and when that eternal life is attain'd, he

* Luk. xxiii. 43.

† Acts vii. 59.

‡ Phil. i. 23.

is Lord of those that inhabit the regions of eternity, as well as of those who dwell in houses of clay.

Again; CHRIST is LORD of the dead, as he appoints their rising out of that state and condition; he breaks the chains and fetters of death, and sets good men out of the reach of it for ever: So CHRIST told the Jews, that * *the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of Son of GOD, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.* After this, he sets new bounds and limits to the empire of death and hell, beyond which they cannot pass. This is very movingly represented in the book of Revelation; † *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works, and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: This is the second death.* Thus far goes the mediatorial Kingdom and Dominion of CHRIST; as he is said to be LORD both of the dead and living.

I shall now spend the remainder of this hour in making some APPLICATION of what has been said.

i. *How great is the sin and folly of those, that reproach and dishonour this LORD.* By how much the more the Dominion of CHRIST is above all others, so much the more shameful and abominable is every instance of reproach cast upon him. To despise the just authority, and revile and oppose the person and government of an earthly Prince, is accounted a very grievous crime, and exposes men to severe and infamous punishments. But how much more grievous is the folly and wickedness of those, that cast contempt upon him, who is greater than all the kings of this earth put together? One would think that all should be ready to take up such words as those of *Jeremiah*

* John v. 25, 28, 29,

† Ch. xx; 13; 14.

the Prophet, * *Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: (that thou shouldst be rever'd above all others) forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms there is none like unto thee.*

What dreadful condemnation must they bring upon themselves, who bid defiance to the highest displeasure of him, that is LORD of both worlds? All that earthly powers can do, is, to kill the body; but this great LORD, after the arrest of death, is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. What folly then can equal this, if men would but seriously think of it, to live and die in a state of infidelity and rebellion to that dread Sovereign, in whose power they are both in life and after death?

Little does the profane sinner think what he is doing, when he makes light of CHRIST the great Judge of men and angels, the LORD of heaven, earth and hell. How awful is the consideration of our taking such a name, as the name of this great LORD upon us in our baptism, and in our profession of the Christian Religion? and how sorry should we be, that we have acted in any thing unbecoming that name we bear? How evil a thing is it in a trifling and thoughtless manner to take the name of this LORD in vain? But to *blaspheme* this worthy name, and cast contempt on the person and government of CHRIST, this is madness and folly beyond description. He certainly knows, and records, every thing that such rebels do and say against him; and he is able to do himself right; and the day hastens when † *he will come with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, which with an impious spirit they have committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* All treasonable words and actions against this mighty Sovereign, if not repented of, will rise up in judgment against men, and throw them into a

* Chap. x. 7.

† Jude 14, 15.

confusion, under which they shall sink for ever, when this LORD himself shall sit as Judge, and pronounce sentence upon them.

2. We should remember that CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the Father.

This is particularly mention'd by St. Paul, after one of the highest descriptions of CHRIST that we have in the Scripture. * *Who being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore GOD also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the Father.*

It would certainly be to darken counsel, by words without knowledge, and to speak very unadvisedly with our lips, if we should suffer our selves to be transported with such a zeal for the honour of CHRIST, as to neglect or lessen that honour which is due to his Father and our Father, to his GOD and our GOD. We have great need of the guidance of the Spirit of truth and wisdom, that we do not fall into dangerous errors on either hand. As we honour the Father so should we honour the Son, and whilst we are concerned for the honour of the Son, we should carefully keep in mind the great errand and aim of our blessed Saviour to glorify his Father, and to honour him that sent him.

It was observed to you in the former part of this discourse, that when we speak of CHRIST as GOD, his Dominion is absolute and without end. He is JEHOVAH the true GOD, the living GOD, and an everlasting King. But when we speak of him as Man and as Mediator, his

Lordship is acquired, and is appointed for a certain time to answer the great ends of redemption. Thus considered he acts with a *delegated* power and authority; and after the resurrection of the dead, when the wicked shall be condemned by him, and sent to their everlasting prison, and when the good are acquitted, and crowned, and received up to glory, then will the Mediator *deliver up his kingdom unto the Father*, as the Apostle expressly tells us in 1 Cor. xv. 24.

It is added in that place (v. 28.) *When all things shall be subdued unto him then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that GOD may be all in all.* Then shall the Son himself be subject, *i. e.* in some other manner than he is subject at present. He is now subject to the Father *in his* whole mediatorial administration, but then he shall be subject so as to *give up* his mediatorial administration. That all power and dominion (as a noted writer * expresses it) may from thenceforth be immediately exercised by the *Deity*; *i. e.* by GOD the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. To support this explication it is observed, “ that there “ is a variation of the *person*, when the being *all in all* is “ spoken of. It is not said, the Son shall be subject to him “ that did put all things under him, that HE may be “ all in all, or that the FATHER may be all in all, “ but that GOD may be all in all: GOD in the *complete* “ notion of that word, as including Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” By being *all in all* is meant, “ that the immediate will of GOD shall reign in all, and be the *proximate* guide of all that blessed world, and there shall be “ no *mediate* or *mediatorial* government betwixt him and “ us, to exact our obedience, and convey to us his favours and rewards: but that we shall render all our “ duty immediately to him, and derive all our happiness “ immediately from the Deity.

But we are not to think that the humanity of CHRIST (says that author) shall be any way *depress'd* or *degraded* by his delivering up his mediatorial kingdom. No: as

* Dr. Scot in *Christian Life*, Vol. 3.

an Ambassador after he is discharged of the *burden* of his embassy, doth still retain the *honour* and *dignity* of it; so the human nature of CHRIST, after he hath surrendered up its mediatorial dominion, shall still remain as highly exalted in *honour*, *dignity* and *beatitude* as ever: and Angels and Saints shall for ever render to it the same religious respect and veneration as they did before; for it shall still remain the chief seat and residence of the Deity, and so God shall reign for ever in it, tho' affairs may not be in such a *manner* administred by it, as now they are. In this respect the kingdom of CHRIST, with that of the Father and the Holy Ghost, will have no end.

When I have declared this to be, what I apprehend the true sense of that difficult place of Scripture, you will give me leave to repeat it; that we are to consider CHRIST as LORD to the *glory of the Father*. He is now in his human nature made LORD of the dead and living, that by his government as Mediator he may bring men to the Father, and may rule them by his Father's laws, and according to his will; and when they are fitted for it, that he may present them to the Father, as those that a holy God may delight in, and may admit to dwell in his immediate presence and glory.

3. We may learn from what has been said, to *honour* CHRIST under those titles and characters which he bears, according to the several provinces in which he rules.

When we think of CHRIST under the character of *Lord of glory*; we should learn to set his glories before us as the greatest realities, and above all the glories of this world. As when our eyes are fix'd but for a moment upon the *Sun*, this earth seems all darkness, and its brightest objects lose their distinction. We should consider CHRIST also in all that glory, as managing for us, if we truly belong to him. He is *preparing mansions* for his faithful servants, and interceding for them that *they may be with him where he is*; and he is continually ready to receive and welcome dislodging souls to the inheritance of the Saints in light. St. Paul expects his crown from the hand of CHRIST, and teaches all that truly believe in him so

to do. 'Tis the LORD the righteous Judge that both *lays up* the crown of righteousness for us, and *gives it* to us *.

Again; when we think of CHRIST under the character of *Head of the Church*, we should look to him as governing and managing things in this *lower* Province, that he may prepare souls, by the agency and ministry of his Spirit, and the means of grace, for his *upper* Province: And when they are prepared, ordering his Angels to see them safely conveyed from one to the other; over-ruling all publick calamities and trials, with all private afflictions and deaths, to serve these great purposes. How differently should we judge of every thing that befalls men in this world, from what we commonly do, could we look upon all occurrences in this light?

Add to this, that when we conceive of CHRIST as Head of the Church, we should be very fearful of invading any of his rights, or distrusting his care for his people, however his cause and interest may seem to suffer or be exposed amongst men. He hath purchased the Church with his own blood; he resides in it as his body; he has given it clear, and full, and sufficient doctrines and precepts to teach and guide it: As GOD he is always and every where present with it: and he will certainly come at the time appointed, both to take account of his servants, and to punish his and their enemies: on him therefore should we cast all our care about his Church and interest.

To proceed; if we would have CHRIST honoured as Head of the Church, we should pray for the daily enlargement of this Province of the Redeemer's Empire; and should take care that we do nothing to narrow the limits of it, by making it less than it is at present, or hindering its farther extent. Tho' there may be differences among Christians in their opinions concerning the formation, and government, of particular Churches and Societies; and tho' there may also be dif-

* 2 Tim. iv. 8.

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ferent sentiments concerning the qualification of Ministers, or Members, for their being received into such particular Churches ; yet we should agree in this, that those who may differ *from us*, and from one another, may notwithstanding belong to CHRIST, and be members of his Catholick Church.

I am very sensible, that the differences amongst Christian Societies are and may be such, that those of one way and of one communion, cannot without sin (*i. e.* not without going contrary to their own judgment) join stately with those of another way, and fully comply with their terms of communion; but we should still hope the best concerning those societies that differ from us, whilst they call on the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST their Lord and ours. I apprehend that none who attend the service of this place will refuse to go along with me in declaring, that we hope to meet many of *all denominations* of Christians in the general assembly of the Church of CHRIST at the end of the world : And many of those with whom we dare not choose to have our lot at present, that yet we can rejoice to think of seeing on the right hand of CHRIST at last.

How pleasing is the thought of such a time, when understandings shall be enlightened, passions subdued, and all pride, and prejudice, and wilful transgression, and bodily imperfection, shall be removed to an eternal distance ? There is one thing not suddenly to be accounted for, but so it certainly is, that whilst we are in these bodies, there are some different Turns in mens countenances, or in their bodily appearance, or in their manner of conversation and behaviour, that make them strangely mistake one another on some occasions, and suspect and dislike one another, when yet their thoughts and designs perhaps are much the same, or but very little different, if they were fully and fairly set to view. Hence, some have called bodies their *disguise*, which being dropt and made more agreeable to their minds and spirits, as they shall be

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when they are raised spiritual bodies, then good men will better know one another, and therefore more love and delight in one another, as well as in their Saviour and their God.

But to return from this digression to the head I am upon: we should learn to honour CHRIST under the character of *Lord of Lords*, and *Head over all things to the Church*, as well as Head of the Church itself. This should encourage us against all the oppositions made to religion, by the Powers of this earth, or by the good or evil things that happen in the course of providence. The LORD, I am speaking of, saith of *Cyrus* that he is his servant; and like *Cyrus*, kings shall fulfil his pleasure; or like *Pharaoh*, they shall prove his power. When he calls his people to *serve him*, it is at the peril of the greatest Potentate that he refuseth to let them go. CHRIST is so far Head over all things to the Church, that he can make the prosperity and peacefulness of the times, to serve his cause and interest; or he can make the divisions, troubles and adversities of the times to promote the good and the increase of his Church: And 'tis in his power to *change* the times and the seasons. We should not therefore be discouraged when human power or policy, or the course of things in the world, seem to make against the interest of a Redeemer, since all power is committed to him, for the sake of his Church and people. 'Tis true the Gospel with its privileges may be driven from one part of the earth to another, and we should dread it, and deprecate it as one of the most grievous calamities that can befall a city or nation, for CHRIST and the Gospel thus to depart from it: But still the Redeemer's glory shall spread, and prevail among the *children of men*, and he must rule till all things be put under him.

4. From what was said we learn, that the *dead are in a state of order and government* as well as the *living*.

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They are expressly said to have a LORD as well as we, and the same LORD with us. As therefore we are under his inspection and influence, and at his will and command, so are they. Therefore the soul does not go into any insensible or unactive state at death, nor does it go into a state of confusion no body knows how, or where; but it is translated into a world of order and government, at the head of which our Redeemer sits as LORD, known, and worshipp'd, and obey'd as such; for as he is LORD of the living, he is said to be LORD of the dead. But it is a vast advantage, that those who die in the LORD are removed from a state of obedience and subjection here, to the immediate presence and kingdom of CHRIST above. They are indeed of the same family still, (as was hinted at first) but they are called up to a nobler apartment, where the furniture is unspeakably richer and more glorious than ours in this *lower story*. They have also much better company, all perfectly wise and good; and they have much more delightful entertainments; and all their employments are suited to the society and place in which they are. How would the realizing apprehensions of this, make us cheerfully leave this world when God calls, and rejoice in the happiness of our departed friends, who are gone before us.

5. It will follow from what has been said, that if we expect to go to CHRIST as our LORD at death, we must yield to him as our LORD in life.

If we refuse to own the blessed JESUS as our LORD now, he will reject and disclaim us hereafter. Those enemies that would not have CHRIST to reign over them in this world, shall be brought forth in the next world and slain before him *.

* Luke xix, 27.

Lastly, We should look to CHRIST under this character, *as finally subduing all his and our enemies.*

It is said, that all his enemies shall be *put under his feet*; *i. e.* by his wisdom and power they shall be sunk into a state of debasement and contempt, as things trodden under foot are. The true Christian therefore should not be dismayed at the struggles and contests that may be occasioned by sin, or Satan, or a wicked and ensnaring world: Since these are all enemies to CHRIST as LORD, he will certainly appear like himself in subduing them, and make those that believe in him shine at last in a final victory and conquest over them. The malice of the devil and his agents, and the malignity of sin, can no more hinder what is to be done, than they could hinder what hath been already done for our salvation. Where this great LORD has made a willing people in the day of his power, and hath slain their natural enmity, only let them keep to him as LORD, and he will cure the remaining disorders of the soul, and remove all its imperfections at last, so as that it shall appear before God without spot or blemish. In this such are encouraged to be *confident*, that * *he who hath begun a good work in them, will perform it until the day of CHRIST.*

From hence it follows, that all those designs and interests, which are opposite to the ruling and saving designs of CHRIST in the world, shall sooner or later sink and be overthrown.

To conclude; let us therefore do homage to the Son, lest he be angry and we perish; let us commit our souls and our affairs into his hands, and depend upon it that he is constantly disposing and ruling all things, though we see him not; and let us patiently

* Phil. i. 6.

wait for him, not suffering our *angry* or *voluptuous* passions to prevail (as theirs are described in 24 *Matthew*) because *the LORD delays his coming*: But let us endeavour at all times to be in such a temper of mind, and in such a course and manner of life, as we shall wish to be in at the appearance of our LORD; so shall we enter with him into that happy state and world, where all that concerns us shall be perfected, and where nothing shall ever come to disturb the peace of his everlasting Empire.

Would to GOD this might be the happiness of all of us.





S E R M O N II.

The Lordship of CHRIST considered, as it was acquired by his dying, rising again, and reviving.



ROM. xiv. 9.

For to this end CHRIST both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be LORD both of the Dead and Living.



HAVING already explain'd these words, and shewn what we are to believe and know concerning the Lordship of CHRIST in general; and having also enquired in what respects he is said to be LORD both of the dead and living; I now proceed,

III. To consider how this Lordship was obtain'd. CHRIST both died, and rose, and revived, THAT he might be LORD.

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In the foregoing Sermon it was shewn, that there are two sorts of dominion belonging to CHRIST: The one, inherent in him as the *only Son* of GOD, on which account he must needs be *Heir* of all things; the other, acquired by virtue of his mediatorial undertaking, and conferred upon his *human nature*. This acquired, imparted Lordship, which belongs to the human nature of CHRIST, is expressly declared to be the *fruit* of his *sufferings*; and 'tis granted more *fully* upon his *resurrection*; and 'tis *perfected*, by that *Life*, to which he is advanced in the heavens. These three things it will be proper to take into our consideration distinctly.

1. To this end CHRIST *died*. His kingdom was founded not as the kingdoms of this earth generally are, by shedding the blood of *others*, but by bleeding and dying *himself*. This he did

(1.) That he might *merit his Lordship* before he entered upon it. By vindicating the rights of the divine government, and the honour of GOD's law, he procured that government to be committed to him, and all the rights of the eternal Lawgiver were trusted in his hand. He did so much for the glory of GOD, and the advancement of his name, that he merited to himself a *name above every name*, and a glory above all created beings. * WORTHY is the Lamb that was slain (because slain; therefore worthy) to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. What an accumulation of honours and advancements do these words represent CHRIST purchasing, by his becoming *obedient unto death*? He paid the greatest price, and atchieved the most great and wonderful things, that he might purchase the greatest reward which could possibly be conferr'd on the human nature; that is, to be LORD of all.

(2.) To this end CHRIST died, that *he might destroy the usurpation of the devil*, and that in which his strength and dominion lay, *sin and falshood*. The Prince

of this world must be cast out, and his *works* destroyed, that the kingdom of a Redeemer might take place, and be set up amongst men. Thus by dying CHRIST overcame the malice, and defeated all the subtilty of apostate spirits. In St. Paul's strong and beautiful language, * *he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross.* In another place 'tis said, † CHRIST *took part with those who are partakers of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.*

By this means CHRIST destroyed *sin* as well as death. *The old man being crucified with him,* as well as the first parent and author of sin vanquished, and *the band writing against us was nailed to the cross.* On this account CHRIST is advanced to the throne, that he might resume the divine authority over man, which was weaken'd and interrupted by the entrance of sin into the world; having made the atonement, he is therefore advanc'd that he may take away all iniquity: In such a connection as this, the Apostle mentions the death and dominion of CHRIST: ‡ *When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* To this end CHRIST died, that he might conquer him who enslaved our race, that with him he might destroy both the reigning and the ruining power of sin, and that he might bring back apostate creatures to their first Sovereign and their first obedience.

(3.) CHRIST died in order to his being LORD, that he might *the more successfully gain subjects to himself.* The salvation of sinners is the principal design, next to the glory of God, for erecting a mediatorial kingdom. To promote this design, and bring men voluntarily into it that they might be saved, CHRIST pleads and solicits, not only with tears but with blood. How powerfully must this draw the hearts of men to a Redeemer, when they consider the sufferings and tor-

* Col. ii. 15.

† Heb. ii. 14.

‡ Heb. i. 3.

ments he endured for their sakes, by which he proved himself the greatest lover of souls, and the greatest benefactor to them that ever was? This makes his subjects yield themselves to him upon a principle of love; and under so powerful a constraint, they can't refuse any thing this LORD calls them to. Hereupon they become *heartly* and *resolved*, in their subjection and obedience to a Sovereign, who has thus endeared himself to them. All nations and people to whom the Gospel is sent, shall either be won over by the cross of CHRIST to make him their Saviour, or stand condemned as creatures not to be gain'd and wrought upon. Our Saviour himself says, speaking of his crucifixion, * *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* All men shall be drawn either to yield a voluntary subjection to him who was sacrificed for them, or to take that condemnation which belongs to such as reject the last and most effectual remedy.

(4.) CHRIST died, that every part of his dominion and power might after this be exercised with the greatest propriety. To instance in the principal branches of his dominion: One part of it lies in the power of forgiving sins, for the Son of man had power when on earth to forgive sins. How exactly right and becoming a thing is it, for him to proclaim and dispense pardon for sin, who undertook to make satisfaction for it, and to destroy its rule and government? He that died for sin and was delivered for our offences, most properly pronounces the comforting sentence, *thy sins are forgiven.* — Another part of the dominion of CHRIST, is the alteration of the law, and rule of life and judgment. In this he acts with the greatest propriety imaginable, when we look to him as first answering the demands of a violated law, and thereupon settling the terms of acceptance and obedience upon a new and better foot; and thus appointing a new rule for the final judgment. — This judgment being committed

* John xii. 32, 33.

to CHRIST is another branch of his dominion. And nothing can appear more fit and becoming, than for him to sit in judgment upon men, after he has suffered graciously for them, but most unrighteously from them; and to pass sentence upon sinners as he appears in their own nature, with all the marks of what he went through for their sakes. * *The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment, BECAUSE he is the Son of man.* On this account he is peculiarly suited to it, and fitted for it, as well as meritorious of it.

Thus much may serve for explication of the first thing here mentioned, by which CHRIST acquired his Lordship; to this end *he died*.

The next thing to be enlarged upon in our Text is, that to this end CHRIST *rose*. His resurrection from the dead was *absolutely necessary* to his actual governing in our nature. So that the word *rose* [ἀνίστη] is not to be parted with in the reading of this verse, though Dr. Mills tells us, it is wanting in some copies. *Eftius* also thinks it was written in the margin only at first, to explain the next word [ἀνίστηναι], and was afterward transcribed into the Text. He thinks it most likely, that the words used in the former part of the verse, were such as to answer to those in the latter part of the verse, and no more: He therefore reads them thus; *to this end CHRIST both died and lived again, that he might be LORD of the dead and living.* But so numerous are the copies that have it according to our translation, and every word here used appears to be of such weight and importance, that we may very well insist upon each of them distinctly; I shall therefore enlarge a little on this head of CHRIST's Resurrection.

(1.) He rose that he might *claim for the body*, that dominion which he had purchased by bearing our sins in his body on the tree. As the last prayer

of CHRIST, in the 17th of *John*, is accounted a pattern of his continual intercession; so the words pronounced there before his death, may speak his claim after he rose from the dead: Addressing to the *Father*, he says, *I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, and now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, &c.* And that he might farther be glorified as a *King*, he prays the *Father* to *keep all* that should be subjects of his kingdom *while in the world*, and to grant them to be *with him* at last to *behold his glory*. In this he claims the glorification of his *body*, as well as his *soul*; and therefore it is that our *vile bodies* are said to be made like *his glorious body*, when this intercessory prayer shall be fully answered. He rose that he might receive the investiture into his office in that same body which suffered and died.

(2.) CHRIST rose, that he might *renew and animate his subjects by a lively hope, and so might become LORD of new creatures*. Hence it is that we are said * *by the resurrection of CHRIST from the dead, to be begotten again unto a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled*. CHRIST rose, that he might minister such a hope to men, as was not before known, for the life and the power of it. 'Tis a hope that truly lives in Christians, and gives life to them, and renders them warm and vigorous in duties and difficulties for CHRIST's sake, and ardent in their expectation of rising from the dead as CHRIST did. By our LORD's resurrection we are drawn out of a dead and hopeless, an insensible or miserable state, into a lively, hopeful, obedient, active and comfortable state; being raised while on earth to newness of life, and having this sure pledge and earnest of our being raised at last to a new and better world.

(3.) CHRIST rose that he might give *full security to his subjects, for the performing every thing that concerned them*. This is particularly mentioned as the *main se-*

* 1 Pct. i. 3, 4.

curity for our being deliver'd from condemnation. * *Who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died; yea rather, that is risen again.* CHRIST has born the condemning sentence in his death, that we may be freed from it; and he is risen again to secure our deliverance, by taking the power of *acquitting and condemning* wholly into his own hands. 'Tis also upon CHRIST's rising again, that the Apostle founds the *certainty* of a future judgment-day. † *God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

(4.) CHRIST rose, that he might be *the first-born from the dead*, and so in this, as well as all other respects, ‡ *might have the preeminence.* This was requisite to his being LORD and chief of the *new raised* world. He must be the *beginning*, the *first* that rose from the *grave* to a glorious immortality, that he might have the precedence in point of *order*, or in the time of his resurrection; and that he might shew his superiority in point of *power*, being the *original* and *cause* of all others rising from the dead. In this he is exalted above all rulers and potentates; therefore we find his being stiled *Prince of the kings of the earth*, is immediately connected with his being † *the first-begotten of the dead.* He hath as much authority over kings, as over any thing else that is to be disposed of and *raised* by him. In these respects CHRIST rose that he might be LORD.

The *third* thing mentioned in our Text is, the *reviving* of CHRIST. To this end of becoming LORD, he not only *died* and *rose*, but 'tis added he *revived*. This word is wanting in one or two copies, but is more generally inserted than the word foregoing. Only one thing must be observed, which will appear much to advantage in the reading of this place, that a very great number of copies use the *simple* verb, that signi-

* Rom. viii. 34.

† Acts xvii. 31.

‡ Colos. i. 18.

§ Rev. i. 5.

fies only *to live*; not the *compound*, which signifies to *revive* or *live again*. As it stands in the compound it seems as if the same thing was put into two words, *rose* and *revived*: But when we read it the other way, there is a very plain and instructive difference in the use of these two expressions, CHRIST both *died*, and *rose*, and *both lived*, or *continues to live*, that he might be LORD of the dead and living. We may also explain the word used in our translation, so as that it shall amount to the very same sense. CHRIST died, *rose* and *revived never to die more*, that he might be LORD of the dead and living. And whatever be the first and best reading of this particular Text, the explication thus given well accords with other parts of Scripture, which speak of the dignity and government of CHRIST. He himself declares elsewhere that the sovereign administration is put into his hand, on account not of his resurrection only, but of his having a *life that shall abide for ever*. * *I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death*. 'Tis therefore very fit we should enlarge a little on *this*, as we have already done on the death of CHRIST, and his resurrection.

(1.) CHRIST revived so as never to die more, that he might *ascend to the regions of immortality, and the chief seat of government*. There is the centre of power and perfection, of *wisdom* and counsel, and from thence all orders are issued out to the several parts of the universe. He therefore whose kingdom is over all, must be raised to such a life, as shall render him fit for those pure regions; and fit to shine and preside amongst the glorious spirits there, who go forth into all parts of the world to execute the divine will. And since all the Angels of God were to be made ministers of the Redeemer's kingdom, where should he place his throne, but amongst those noble and exalted beings, who would be sure to pay the highest respect to him;

* Rev. i. 18.

and chearfully wing their way wherever he should send them? 'Tis fit that such a king should live where he may best survey all his dominions, and best order every thing that relates to them. Therefore he is said to have placed his throne in the heavens, and to be sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

(2.) CHRIST revived so as never to die more, that he might become a vital head to his kingdom. That he might be to all his subjects a head of gracious influence, as well as powerful command. The kingdom of CHRIST as Mediator, is the kingdom of a Prophet and a Priest, and he must therefore continue to live, that he may give continual evidence and force to his instructions, as a Prophet; and that he may render his intercessions and all his priestly acts the more effectual. He must live so as to be able to give life, and to cherish it, and to restore it; so as to diffuse all kinds of life to all his subjects: For it is because he lives, that they shall live also. Whatever CHRIST is and hath, is lodged in him as a publick store and treasury, and it is most readily and effectually communicated by him.

(3.) CHRIST must revive so as never to die more, because never dying souls, and never dying concerns, were to be his chief care. CHRIST did not come to take upon him the management of our mortal and worldly affairs; these he leaves to be supervis'd, directed, and controll'd by the laws and governments amongst men: But he came to rescue souls from their affection to earthly things, and from their anxious care about them, and to set life and immortality in a clear light before them, and so to make every thing give way to their eternal interests. He must therefore revive and live in such a place and manner, that it might be an inducement to seek those things which are above, when we consider that * CHRIST is there at the right hand of God. He resides in that court where our most important concerns lie, and is preparing and making all

* Colof. iii. 1.

ready for our appearance there, and for our final reception into everlasting habitations. That leads me to add once more,

(4.) CHRIST revived and lives for ever, that *since his subjects must change worlds, they may find their LORD where their last and longest abode is to be.* Had he lived on this earth and revived only to be enthroned here, the greatest and best of his subjects had wanted his presence; and then it would have been a dreadful thing indeed to die, because it would be to leave CHRIST: But now to die, is to go to CHRIST, and to that place where he lives on purpose that he may receive his faithful followers throughout all generations. CHRIST did not revive so as to fix his throne and residence in this passage state, for that would have looked as if he were LORD of passengers only: But he revives and lives where the continual and eternal abode of his servants must be.

These things may very properly be considered, as belonging to this expression, that CHRIST revived and lives *where* he now does, and *as* he now does, to this end our Text mentions, that he might become LORD both of the dead and living.

Take a view of all the particulars under these three words [*died, and rose, and revived*] as they may be put together, and they stand thus. CHRIST died to merit his Lordship, and rose to claim it, and revived so as continually to enjoy and execute it. He died to destroy him that had the power of death, he rose to enliven and quicken those who were in a state of death, and he lives for ever to be a continual head of life and gracious influence. He died to win the hearts of his subjects, he rose to secure his engagements and promises to them, and he lives for ever that he may take their everlasting concernments into his own hands. He died that every part of his dominion might be exercised afterward with the greatest propriety, he rose that in this as well as all other things he might have the preeminence, and he lives for ever in the
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regions of immortality, that he may gather all his subjects to him as they depart out of this world, and that he and they may then have their everlasting abode together.

Having thus distinctly accounted for each particular step here mentioned in CHRIST's acquiring and obtaining his mediatorial kingdom, the less of our time will be taken up in speaking to the last general head. Which is

IV. To mention some *Reasons* for a Lordship's being thus founded and constituted. In making this a head of discourse by itself, after the particular explication of the things foregoing, it was my intention to add such general reasons, as shall have a view to the *death* and *resurrection* and the *present life* of CHRIST in the heavens, taking them all together.

Here I find several things insisted on, in our *Books of Divinity*, to account for this, *viz.* God constituted such a kingdom that he might govern us in a way accommodated to the present degenerate state of our nature.—— That the spreading and contagion of idolatry might the more effectually be cured and prevented.—— That our obedience might be more powerfully encouraged.—— That we might have the fuller assurance of our future reward.—— That God may be glorified, and mercy itself justified in the final rejection and condemnation of obstinately rebellious and impenitent sinners.—— And that heaven may eternally be filled with joy and songs of praise, on account of this wonderful contrivance and constitution of things.—— But the reasons I shall now choose to insist upon, are these that follow.

1. It *was before ordained*, that the Messiah's Kingdom and Lordship should be settled as our Text describes. Hence it was that our LORD after his resurrection,

rection, beginning at § *Moses and all the Prophets, and expounding the things concerning himself in all the Scripture, proved clearly that CHRIST ought to suffer and to enter into his glory.* He set this constitution of things in such a light, as to make the hearts of those he spoke to, burn within them. The suffering of CHRIST was proved *necessary* to his glory, and that it *ought* to be in such a manner the Son of man should gain his throne. Not that it was *naturally* necessary; nor yet necessary through *violence*, as if it were unavoidable by reason of the furious opposition made to CHRIST; but it was necessary by the *divine ordination* and appointment *. It was foreordained and settled from the beginning, that the Redeemer of men should *suffer* before he should *ascend to glory*. In the language of one prophecy, † *He must drink of the brook in the way* (i. e. bow down to afflictions and death) *therefore shall he lift up the head*. In the language of another prophecy, he was ‡ *to have a portion divided with the great, and to divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul unto death*. The Prophet Daniel in one place says, *that Messiah the Prince should be cut off*: In another place he says, *that he saw in visions one like the Son of man come to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him: ** And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him*. With an eye to these and such like places, the Apostle describes our blessed Saviour as † *humbling himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God highly exalted him*.

2. Another reason for setting up such a kingdom, is this, *that it might be entirely distinct from the kingdoms*

§ Luke xxiv. 26, 27.

* Non fuit necessitas natura, aut violentia, sed ordinationis divina.

† Psal. cx. ult.

‡ Isai. liii. 12.

** Dan. vii. 13, 14.

† Phil. ii. 8, 9.

of *this world*. There is nothing more plainly spoken in Scripture than that of our Saviour, **My kingdom is not of this world*. The dominion of CHRIST was never intended to disturb and embarrass affairs of state, or to break in upon the rights of princes, or to dissolve those forms of government which were established and agreed to amongst men. But it was designed to gather out of all kingdoms and all nations, a number of penitent, believing and faithful souls, that should make it their main business to seek for glory and immortality. In thus doing, they are required to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty; and to take their lot, whatever it may be, in yielding themselves to CHRIST and obeying his Gospel, till they shall receive the recompense and crown of Life in another world. So that the rulers of this earth, have no manner of reason to take umbrage, from the setting up the Lordship of CHRIST.

The Gospel kingdom is evidently contrived so (were this matter but thoroughly studied) as to prevent mens mingling and confounding their temporal interests with their eternal concerns; to prevent their naming the kingdom of CHRIST, when they mean a kingdom that is of and for this world; and to prevent any other methods being used to make subjects of CHRIST, or to keep them in their subjection to him, but the pleas of *dying love* taken from his cross, and a *lively hope* taken from his resurrection, with all the gracious and glorious consequences of his suffering and reviving.

How amazing is it, that this plain reason of the Redeemer's kingdom being formed and constituted as before described, should be so little understood by the generality of Christians? Or what is worse, if it be understood, that it should be disregarded and set aside as it is in the most flagrant instances.

* John xviii. 36.

3. The kingdom of CHRIST as Mediator was founded and established in this manner, that *it might be a more extensive and universal blessing.*

JESUS having passed through all states (i. e. dwelling with men here on *earth*, being a sojourner among the *dead*, and then being raised *to life* again) he has an experimental knowledge of them all. He knows how to suit his administration, and to extend proper blessings to each of them.

Had the throne of a Redeemer been set up on this side the *grave*, those *in* it would have lain hopeless prisoners, and those on *the other side* of it would have wanted many blessings which they now enjoy in the blissful presence of their and our LORD. But we, on the other hand, are no losers by his going to them, and dwelling in the regions of immortality. We have not indeed the bodily presence of CHRIST; and we might not have enjoyed it though he had been upon this earth: For if he had fixed the seat of his empire, where he spent his life, in *Judea* or at *Jerusalem*, still he would be absent from us. Or if he should be present in this kingdom, he must then be absent from others. Whereas matters are now ordered so, that he is impartially diffusing his gifts and graces to all parts of his dominion; and by sending his Spirit to dwell with men, he is equally present in all places where he has a Church and people. With an eye to this he told his Disciples, *it was expedient for them he should go away.*

The Holy Ghost was not to be given, till JESUS was glorified; but then he promises the Spirit should be sent unto them. This infinite Spirit is not confined, as the body of CHRIST must needs be, to one City, or one Church, or one Kingdom at a time; but he can be with all the congregations of them that call upon the name of the LORD JESUS, and in all the hearts of them that love and fear him, throughout the whole world at once.

So that there was manifestly this reason for CHRIST's taking the steps he did, *viz.* that his dominion in his mediatorial capacity might be a more extensive blessing.

4. A farther reason for this was, *to lay the subjects of this kingdom under all manner of ties and obligations to honour and obey their LORD.* They are his by the right of *creation*, and by the right of *maintenance and preservation*; on this account they owe him all homage and subjection; But then because all creatures are thus far oblig'd to him, he becomes LORD of the children of men in a *peculiar* sense, so as to lay them under greater obligations than any of those creatures which are only made and preserved by him. "Be-
" sides his original right of creation (says Bishop
" *Pearson*) and his continued right of preservation,
" we shall find a more peculiar right of *redemption*,
" belonging properly to the sons of men. And in
" this redemption, though a single word, we shall
" find a double title to a most just dominion, one of
" *conquest*, another of *purchase*." That writer has an admirable *note* for explication of both these, according to the *Roman* custom and the civil law. But I must not stay upon this head, only to observe, that the conquest being obtained and the purchase made, in such a manner as that we have been explaining, our obligation to obedience is hereby carried higher than ever any conquest or purchase in the world could pretend to. We that are bought with so invaluable a price as the blood of our LORD himself, must own that his claim to our obedience is infinitely beyond all others. Under a sense of this he obliges all his subjects by *compact and agreement*, to acknowledge his dominion, and he covenants with them to rule and save them according to those wise and gracious measures laid down in the Gospel.

And yet farther, it was proposed, when he revived and ascended to the right hand of GOD, that he

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would give a *crown* and *throne* (as he himself is crowned and enthroned) to those that follow him in his temptations here on earth, and keep faithful to him unto death : So that he offers ten thousand times more to engage our obedience, than any tempter can offer to draw us to disobedience. He hath thus made our obligations to him, as numerous, and strong, and great, as possible; the ties of *compact*, and *promotion*, being added to all the other ties and obligations.

From hence we may now pass on to the APPLICATION. In which I shall be shorter at present, because there was so large an application made of what was said concerning the Lordship and Kingdom of CHRIST in the former discourse.

1. From what we have now been upon, it may certainly be concluded, and should stedfastly be maintained against all opposers, *that a kingdom thus raised and settled must be indeed the kingdom of God.*

It is quite the reverse of all human policy, by dying and suffering in the most shameful manner, to think of erecting a kingdom. This made the *Jews* look upon the Cross of CHRIST as a *stumbling-block*, and the *Greeks* accounted it *foolishness*; but in reality it was, and by the event it fully appears to be, the *wisdom* of GOD and the *power* of GOD. By this means CHRIST became LORD, not of a particular nation and people only; (as the *Jews* would have had their *Messiah* to render *them* great and glorious, though he had crushed all the rest of the world;) but he becomes an universal blessing, and is made LORD of all, which shews that this dominion is indeed from him whose all things are.

Again, let it be considered, that though kings may subdue men and kingdoms, yet they can't conquer *sin*. After their greatest triumphs, they are led captive by one or other iniquity and corrupt affection, and they rule generally by the vices and passions of others. But

CHRIST

CHRIST has set up a kingdom, by first taking away and subduing sin; and by gradually freeing his subjects from it, and making them holy; therefore he is called the *King of Saints*. A farther notable proof, this, of his kingdom being the kingdom of God.—— Which is yet farther evinced by his resurrection from the dead, and by the advancement and spreading of his dominion in the world ever since his reviving. Mere success I know is no argument of a cause being from God, but *success in such a way* as that of the Gospel, certainly proves it is of God.

For a kingdom to be set up in the hearts of men, contrary to all the corruptions of nature, and in opposition to many boasted refinements of nature too: Contrary to the force of common and prevailing evil customs and prejudices, and contrary to the most venerable and powerful prejudices, those of the several religions in which men had been educated: Contrary to all the idolized pleasures, and honours, and profits, and enjoyments of this world; and restraining men and laying checks upon them even in the pursuit of things lawful to guard against such as were unlawful, and all with an eye to distant things and a distant world: For a kingdom of such a nature as this to be set up, by the most unlikely unpromising instruments, by a handful of mean and despised men, that went about desiring to know nothing but CHRIST and him crucified: For such a kingdom to gain ground, in spite of the greatest oppositions that could be made by all the learning and wisdom, the power and authority of the world: For a kingdom, that was to consist in *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, to prevail against all the falsifying arts and vices of men, and against their rages and persecutions, and against their sensualities, pomps and vanities: Such things as these certainly shew that a kingdom *thus* founded and spread, thus making its way from the cross of CHRIST, can be no other than the kingdom of God.

2. When we hear of these things, *we should long to know CHRIST as dying, rising, and reviving, and should count all things (as St. Paul did) but loss for the excellency of this knowledge.* These things the Angels desire to look into, they stoop down, and pry narrowly, and wonder, and adore; and should not we search then, till our admiration and praises be raised also? No tongue can tell the amazing transporting displays of wisdom, and grace, and power, that a believing and diligently searching mind discovers in the death and revival of the LORD CHRIST: Entertainments there are, great enough, to reward the most attentive and laboured consideration of these important transactions. Trifling and empty minds may despise them; sensual and worldly hearts may set themselves against them; infidel talkers and thinkers may undervalue them, and prize other knowledge and other attainments beyond things of this nature; and the bare professor may content himself in owning the *truth* of what is said of CHRIST's dominion, without being affected as he ought with the *importance* of it. But he that considers the sufferings and exaltation of the LORD aright, will ardently desire to ** know him in the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death*, if by any means he may attain to that state of *advancement* and blessed *perfection*, to which such a conformity to CHRIST will lead us.

3. *We should bless God, that has put our souls and their everlasting concerns into such hands, and should heartily choose to lodge them there our selves.* They could not possibly be put into wiser and better hands, or where there would be so much love to us, CHRIST having loved us so as to die for our sins, and having

* Phil. iii, 10, 11.

declared the greatest affection and concern for us after his revival and advancement to glory. We can no where promise our selves such safety and happiness as in committing our spirits, with all that concerns them, to this LORD.

If our heavenly Father and Owner has pass'd us over into the hands of Jesus, to be taught, and conducted, and judged by him, surely we ought upon the first intimation of this to fly to him, and take his yoke upon us, and engage to be his faithful servants as long as we live. When God gives the rule to his Son, one would expect that no creature should refuse to obey, and to take him for his LORD. Whatever others do, let us choose to put our All into the hands of him, to whom the Father has committed all things.

But then we ought withal to consider it, that if we take CHRIST upon a throne, we must also take him upon a cross; being ready to deny our selves, and in every thing he requires to suffer with him, before we expect to be glorified with him. It is a spiritual felony to snatch at Gospel privileges, and Gospel hopes, without passing to them as CHRIST did to his exaltation and glory.

Let us also remember, that to compliment CHRIST with the title of LORD, and to make a profession of giving up all to him, will not avail us, unless we do *those things* which he requires of us; for * *we are under the law to CHRIST*. And our Saviour himself assureth us, † *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven*. Yet here again, when we consider that CHRIST's yoke is *easy and his burden light*, compared with other yokes and burdens, and considering the grace now afforded us, still we should rejoice that we are in such hands.

* 1 Cor. ix. 21.

† Mat. vii. 21.

4. *We should fear above all things, a not answering the obligations we are under to obey this LORD.* The obligations that arise from the death of CHRIST, and his rising again, and from his now living to transact with us and for us, are exceeding great; and if they are considered thoroughly as they have been stated, they must excite a very awful and lasting concern in us, not to break through, or at any time neglect claims and ties that are so weighty and unparallel'd. This will teach us to watch against all conversation and management, that looks like a setting up for independency; as if we could secure a happiness to our selves, or might make our own will and inclination a law to our selves, without consulting or duly referring to this LORD. This will likewise make us abhor all trifling with the honour and interests of our LORD; and will make us dread above all things apostatizing from him, and being cast out of his kingdom at last: Of *how much sorer punishment shall such be thought worthy*, than those who are never brought under their obligations?

5. *We should see to it that our obedience to other powers be such as becomes the subjects of the LORD CHRIST.* This will regulate our submission to the civil power, and to magistrates: Teaching us to consider what this LORD of Lords indispensibly requires of us, and so to *give unto God the things that are God's*: And at the same time, what is due to those human governments, that are providentially ordained for the management of all our temporal concerns, and so to *give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*. In matters of conscience none can be LORD, but he who is able to give law to our thoughts and hearts, and who is able to judge our spirits. But as to our outward actions, and enjoyments, we must submit to the magistrate and the laws of our country, in what they require of us for the publick good, and without invading the province of CHRIST. And we must be sub-
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ject to them for conscience sake, and obey them in the LORD; in all referring our selves to him who is supreme sovereign, and improving every thing so as may best carry on his saving designs in our own or others souls.

By this also we are to regulate our subjection to all *ecclesiastical power*. I shall say nothing of the power of *national Churches*, commonly so called; because as *national* they have no power but what is *civil*. Let me only observe here, that great regards are certainly due to Christian societies, and their respective ministers, when they keep to the orders and institutions of the LORD CHRIST: But not when they make things *necessary*, which the wisdom of CHRIST has seen fit to leave *indifferent*; and require terms of communion which CHRIST has not required; and then fall into parties about these things, and would call men from the enlarged state of Christians, and the noble, useful and generous spirit of Christianity, to enter into confinement, and to limit all friendships and kindnesses to those of one opinion or of one way. Just and proper thoughts on the *extent* of CHRIST's Lordship, and on the *method* of founding and establishing it, would cure many of our disorders, and promote a more universal good understanding amongst Christians.

6^{thly}, and lastly, *Let it be our ambition rather to be great in the kingdom of CHRIST, than to obtain any greatness or honours in the kingdoms of this world*. Let us seek first the kingdom of CHRIST and his righteousness, and possibly other advantages and honours may be thrown in to us, at least to some amongst us; and you may be made doubly blessings by this means, *i. e.* both to the world, and to the Church of CHRIST. But though distinguishing favours as to this life should be withheld, you will have no reason to envy the great on earth, if you become great in the kingdom of a Redeemer.

For the day is hastening when all these kingdoms shall be dissolved, and the glory of them shall vanish into fire and smoke, and * *the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and bond and free, shall fly to dens, and call to the mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* Then to shine like the Sun in the kingdom of our Father, and to be glorified with CHRIST, will appear to All the most desirable advancement. In the mean time we ought also to consider that the kingdoms of this world are liable to continual revolutions and calamities of one kind or other. But in CHRIST we have peace and rest, and are taught for this reason to be of good courage, because *he has overcome the world.*

Now to this mighty LORD, who was dead, but is alive and lives for evermore, be glory and dominion throughout all ages. Amen.

* Rev. vi. 15.

FINIS.



